



Andover Housing Authority
Resident/Community Garden Planting
Policy

Board Approved: 6/24/2026

I. PURPOSE

This policy establishes uniform rules governing gardening and planting on Housing Authority property to:

- Protect Housing Authority property and infrastructure
- Ensure safe, sanitary, and accessible conditions
- Promote fair and equitable use of common areas
- Support reasonable resident enjoyment of outdoor spaces
- Ensure compliance with state-aided public housing lease requirements and EOHLC regulations

This policy is incorporated into tenant obligations under the lease and applicable Housing Authority rules.

II. AUTHORITY AND APPLICABILITY

All exterior areas are Housing Authority property.

No alterations may be made without prior written approval.

This policy is adopted under lease Section IX(R) (Alterations).

This policy applies to all residents, household members, and guests.

III. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Approval Required

Written approval is required for any planting or container beyond standard allowance. Approvals are based on safety, location, and impact and applied consistently.

B. Permitted Gardening Areas

Where approved, residents may garden only in:

- Areas immediately adjacent to their unit (as designated)
- Assigned garden plots
- Approved container locations (patio or stoop areas)

C. Prohibited Areas

Residents may not:

- Plant in shared lawns, walkways, or open/common areas
- Use or alter areas assigned to another resident

- Extend planting beyond approved boundaries
- Claim unassigned space

Unauthorized use of Housing Authority property is prohibited.

IV. PROTECTION OF PROPERTY

Residents may not dig up lawns or alter landscaping.

Unauthorized gardening may be considered an alteration under the lease.

V. CONTAINER AND VEGETABLE GARDENING

Vegetable gardening is permitted only:

- In containers, OR
- In designated Housing Authority garden areas

In-ground vegetable gardening is not permitted unless explicitly approved.

Container Standards

- Default limit: two (2) containers per household
- Additional containers may be approved based on space, safety, operational needs, or reasonable accommodation

Size and Safety Requirements:

- Containers should not exceed approximately **10 gallons in capacity** unless approved
- Containers must be of a size and weight that can be **safely moved by one person**
- Containers must be stable and not pose a tipping hazard

Placement Requirements:

- Must not obstruct:
 - Entrances
 - Sidewalks
 - Emergency egress
 - Maintenance access
- A minimum **36-inch clear path** must be maintained for accessibility

Condition and Drainage:

- Containers must have proper drainage
- Must not create standing water, leaks, or slip hazards
- Must be maintained in a clean, safe, and orderly condition

Prohibited Without Approval:

- Containers larger than typical residential planters (over ~10 gallons)
- Raised beds or boxed garden structures
- Containers placed directly on lawns where damage may occur
- Any container or setup that functions as a permanent installation

Containers must be removed or properly stored at the end of the growing season unless otherwise approved.

VI. APPROVED IN-GROUND PLANTING

Must stay within approved boundaries and not impact utilities or structures.
Approved non-removable plantings become Housing Authority property.
Containers remain resident property and must be removed seasonally.

Ownership of Plantings:

Any in-ground planting or alteration approved by the Housing Authority that is affixed to the grounds and cannot be removed without damage shall become the property of the Housing Authority.

Containers and other movable items remain the property of the resident and must be removed at the end of the growing season unless otherwise approved.

VII. PROHIBITED PLANTS AND MATERIALS**A. Plants**

The following are prohibited:

- Invasive or spreading species (e.g., bamboo)
- Trees or large shrubs
- Climbing vines attached to buildings
- Any plant that extends beyond approved areas

B. Materials

The following are not allowed without approval:

- Raised beds
- Edging, fencing, bricks, or stones
- Non-garden items or debris

VIII. MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Residents approved to garden must:

- Maintain areas in a clean, orderly, and safe condition

- Remove weeds, trash, and dead plants
- Prevent pest or rodent conditions
- Store tools properly

Failure to maintain may result in corrective action.

IX. WATER USE AND DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Residents must:

- Comply with all state and local water restrictions
- Use water responsibly and avoid waste
- Follow drought-related guidance

The Housing Authority supports water conservation consistent with state policy.

Residents are encouraged to learn more:

- Massachusetts Drought Conditions: www.mass.gov/ma-drought-management
- Water Conservation Tips: www.mass.gov/conservemawater

X. SEASONAL REQUIREMENTS

Residents must:

- Remove containers and plantings at the end of the growing season unless approved otherwise
- Restore areas to original condition

Unmaintained or abandoned materials may be removed.

XI. INSPECTIONS

The Housing Authority may inspect exterior areas in accordance with lease requirements and applicable notice standards.

Residents must comply with any corrective directives.

XII. ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

Residents will receive notice and time to cure violations.

HA may remove unauthorized plantings and charge costs per lease.

A. Notice and Opportunity to Cure

Except in cases of emergency, residents will receive:

- Written notice of violation
- Reasonable time (typically 30 days) to correct the issue

B. Immediate Action (Limited Circumstances)

The Housing Authority may take immediate action without advance notice only when conditions pose:

- Health or safety risk
- Risk of property damage
- Violation of law or emergency conditions

C. Corrective Actions May Include:

- Removal of unauthorized plantings
- Restoration of affected areas
- Charges for damages (per lease provisions)
- Suspension of gardening privileges

D. Lease Enforcement

Failure to comply with this policy may constitute a violation of lease obligations, including:

- Failure to maintain premises
- Damage to Housing Authority property
- Violation of Housing Authority rules

All enforcement will follow lease and regulatory requirements.

XIII. GARDENING PRIVILEGES

Gardening is permitted as part of resident use of the premises, subject to compliance with this policy.

The Housing Authority may:

- Approve or deny requests based on established criteria
- Modify garden areas due to operational needs
- Revoke privileges for non-compliance

All decisions will be applied fairly, reasonably, and consistently.

XIV. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Residents may request reasonable accommodation for gardening-related needs due to disability.

Requests will be evaluated in accordance with fair housing laws.

XV. GRIEVANCE RIGHTS

Residents have the right to challenge Housing Authority actions under this policy through the Housing Authority's grievance procedure.

Information on filing a grievance is available from the Housing Authority office.

XIV. APPLICATION PROCESS

Residents must submit a Garden Application including:

- Requested location
- Type of planting
- Agreement to comply with policy

Approval must be received prior to any planting.

XIV. RESIDENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Residents must sign acknowledgment agreeing to comply with:

- Approved planting areas
- Maintenance requirements
- Water restrictions
- All Housing Authority policies

Tenant Name: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Sample letter



ANDOVER HOUSING AUTHORITY

100 Morton Street

Andover, Mass. 01810

Tel. 978-475-2365

FAX: 978-475-0313

TDD 1-800-545-1833 X 372

GARDEN APPLICATION & APPROVAL FORM

Resident Information

- Name: _____
- Address/Unit #: _____
- Phone Number: _____
- Email (optional): _____

Gardening Request Details

1. **Type of Gardening (check all that apply):**
 - ☐ Containers (pots/buckets)
 - ☐ Designated Garden Plot
 - ☐ Flower Planting (limited in-ground, if approved)
2. **What do you plan to grow?**

-
1. **Requested Location:**
 - ☐ Directly in front of my unit (if applicable)
 - ☐ Assigned garden plot
 - ☐ Patio/container area

Describe exact location:

Maintenance & Water Use

1. Do you agree to maintain your garden (weeding, watering, cleanup)?
 - ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Do you agree to follow water restrictions due to drought conditions?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Acknowledgment of Rules

By signing below, I understand and agree that:

- I may **only plant in approved areas directly associated with my unit**
- I will **not plant in another resident's space or shared lawn areas**
- Vegetable gardening must be **in containers or designated garden areas only**
- I will **not dig up lawns or expand planting areas**
- I will comply with all Housing Authority Garden Policy requirements
- Failure to comply may result in removal, charges, and loss of privileges

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Housing Authority Use Only

Application Status: ☐ Approved ☐ Denied

Approved Location: _____

Special Conditions (if any):

AHA Staff Signature: _____

Date: _____

Sample letter



ANDOVER HOUSING AUTHORITY

100 Morton Street Andover, Mass. 01810 Tel. 978-475-2365 FAX: 978-475-0313
TDD 1-800-545-1833 X 372

30-DAY COMPLIANCE NOTICE – UNAUTHORIZED GARDENS

Date: _____

Resident Name: _____

Address/Unit #: _____

RE: NOTICE OF NON-COMPLIANCE – UNAUTHORIZED GARDENING

This letter serves as formal notice that you are currently in violation of the Housing Authority's **Garden and Planting Policy**.

It has been observed that:

- ☐ Gardening has been established in a **non-approved location**
- ☐ Planting has extended into **common lawn areas**
- ☐ Planting is occurring in **another resident's space**
- ☐ Lawn areas have been **dug up or altered**
- ☐ Unauthorized **in-ground vegetable gardening** is present

Required Action – 30 Days to Comply

You are required to correct this violation within **30 days of the date of this notice** by:

- Removing all unauthorized plantings
- Restoring the lawn and affected area to its original condition
- Limiting any future gardening to approved container or designated areas

Important Notice

If the violation is **not corrected within 30 days**:

- The Housing Authority will **remove all plantings without further notice**
- You may be **charged for labor and restoration costs**
- You may lose gardening privileges
- Continued non-compliance may result in a **lease violation and enforcement action**

Option to Comply Through Approval

If you wish to continue gardening, you must:

- Submit a **Garden Application Form**
- Limit gardening to **approved areas only**

Questions or Assistance

If you have questions or need assistance complying, please contact the office at:
978-475-2365

Failure to comply with Housing Authority policies constitutes a violation of your lease.

Staff Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____